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Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01
INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02
SS-15 USIA-06 ACDA-12 OES-07 DOE-11 SOE-02 /101 W
----------100595 092205Z /66
R 091335Z JAN 78
FM AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8610
INFO AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMCONSUL BOMBAY
AMCONSUL CALCUTTA
AMCONSUL MADRAS
CINCPAC

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CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PARM, MNUC, IN, US
SUBJECT: INDO-US NUCLEAR ISSUE

REF: NEW DELHI 0354 (NOTAL)

1. INDO-US DIFFERENCES OVER NUCLEAR POLICY CONTINUED A FOCUS OF EDITORIAL ATTENTION HERE OVER THE WEEKEND. TWO DELHI PAPERS UNFRIENDLY TO THE US FOUND IN SENATOR RIBICOFF'S PRESS CONFERENCE REMARKS FURTHER, CLEARER EVIDENCE OF THE UNACCEPT-ABILITY TO INDIA OF US NON-PROLIFERATION POLICIES. OTHER PAPERS COMMENTED MORE GENERALLY ON THE ISSUE. THIS MESSAGE SUMMARIZES RIBICOFF'S COMMENTS, THE COVERAGE THEY GOT AND THE REACTION THEY PROVOKED, AND OTHER NUCLEAR EDITORIAL HIGHLIGHTS.

2. STATING AT THE OUTSET THAT HE WAS SPEAKING PERSONALLY,
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SENATOR RIBICOFF SAID THAT HE DID NOT THINK THE SENATE WOULD BE VERY SYMPATHETIC TO THE PM'S POINT OF VIEW ON THE NON-PROLIFERATION ISSUE AS EXPRESSED TO THE SENATORS AND REPORTED IN THE PRESS. (NEW DELHI 0307). THE US FEELS VERY STRONGLY AGAINST THE SPREAD OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS AND INDIA, WHICH HAS ALWAYS STOOD AT THE FOREFRONT FOR LIMITING THE SPREAD OF ALL ARMS AND FOR PEACE AND AGAINST WAR SHOULD NOT BE ONE OF THE

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MAJOR COUNTRIES WHICH OPTS FOR THE SPREAD OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS.
PROLIFERATION HAS TO STOP SOMEWHERE.

3. RIBICOFF SAID HE UNDERSTOOD THE PM'S VIEWPOINT THAT THERE IS A NUCLEAR CLUB AND THAT IT IS UNFAIR FOR THOSE IN IT TO ASK OTHERS TO FOREGO NUCLEAR WEAPONS. HE MENTIONED THE EFFORTS OF THE LONDON SUPPLIERS, AND PASSAGE OF THE NON-PROLIFERATION BILL BY THE HOUSE. HE MADE IT CLEAR THAT THE PROVISIONS OF THE HOUSE BILL WOULD INCLUDE INDIA AND THAT THE SENATE WOULD ADOPT SIMILAR LEGISLATION EARLY IN THE YEAR. THE PRESIDENT WOULD SIGN THE BILL, AND UNDER THESE CIRCUMSTANCES THE US WOULD BE FORCED TO STOP THE SHIPMENT OF NUCLEAR MATERIAL TO ANY COUNTRY WHICH "WOULD SEEK TO INTERFERE WITH OR WOULDN'T COMPLY WITH THE REQUIREMENTS." RIBICOFF ADDED THAT HE HAD THE HIGHEST RESPECT FOR THE PM BUT WAS AT A LOSS TO UNDERSTAND HIS PHILOSOPHY.

4. ASKED WHETHER US POLICY WOULD COME IN THE WAY OF DEVELOPING NUCLEAR ENERGY FOR PEACEFUL PURPOSES, RIBICOFF SAID "THERE IS NO PROBLEM". REPLYING TO A QUESTION ON PNE'S, HE SAID THAT IN HIS OPINION THE INDIA PNE, (WHICH HE NOTED WAS DECIDED ON BY THE PREVIOUS INDIAN GOVERNMENT) WAS INCONSISTENT WITH THE UNDERSTANDING OF THE USG ON HOW NUCLEAR MATERIAL SUPPLIED TO INDIA SHOULD BE USED. "AND OF COURSE, I BLAME THE AMERICAN STATE DEPARTMENT AT THE BEGINNING FOR GLOSSING OVER THE REALITIES. THEY TRIED TO BLAME THIS ON CANADA AND IT
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WASN'T CANADA. IT WAS THE SENDING OF HEAVY WATER FROM THE US, THAT THE INDIAN GOVERNMENT AND INDIAN SCIENTISTS USED FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF THIS DEVICE." HE ADDED THAT THE TIME HAS COME TO BE CANDID WITH OUR OWN COUNTRIES AND WITH THE WORLD, FOR THE ISSUE IS BIGGER THAN ANY GOVERNMENT OR ANY MAN.

5. RIBICOFF SAID THAT THE POLICY GOES FOR EVERY OTHER COUNTRY, AND MENTIONED SPECIFICALLY BRAZIL AND PAKISTAN. HE REITERATED THAT NO EXCEPTION SHOULD BE MADE". "IF INDIA CAN DO ON (SIC) ITS OWN THAT'S HER BUSINESS, BUT I AM AGAINST IT PERSONALLY." RIBICOFF RECALLED THE DIFFICULTIES HIS GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS COMMITTEE HAD ON THE NON-PROLIFERATION ISSUE WITH PRESIDENTS NIXON AND FORD, AND STRESSED THAT PRESIDENT CARTER AGREES WITH THE COMMITTEE. HE SAID THAT HE AGREED WITH PM DESAI THAT PEOPLE WHO HAVE NUCLEAR ARMS SHOULD PUT THEMSELVES IN A POSITION TO ELIMINATE THEM, BUT ADDED THAT THIS IS A VERY COMPLEX MATTER. THE RULES BEING WORKED OUT IN LONDON SHOULD BE ENCOURAGED AND THE US SHOULD DO EVERYTHING IT POSSIBLY CAN TO STOP THE SPREAD OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS.

6. ASKED ABOUT THE PRESIDENT'S OFFER HERE OF HEAVY WATER,

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RIBICOFF SAID THAT IT WAS INCONCEIVABLE TO HIM THAT THE PRESI-
DENT WILL ALLOW THE SHIPMENT OF MATERIAL THAT WOULD ALLOW THE
DEVELOPMENT OF FUTURE NUCLEAR WEAPONS. (SEN STEVENS INTER-
VENED TO ASSURE THE COMMITMENT WOULD BE HONORED.) HE SAID
HE BELIEVED THAT IF THERE WAS INTERNATIONAL INSPECTION AND
IF THE MATERIAL WERE USED FOR PEACEFUL PURPOSES, THE US SHOULD
DO EVERYTHING IT POSSIBLY COULD TO SUPPLY INDIA WITH ENOUGH
HEAVY WATER OR URANIUM TO PERMIT THE PEACEFUL USE OF ENERGY,
BUT SHOULD ASSURE THAT THIS WOULD NOT BE DIVERTED TO NUCLEAR
BOMBS.

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7. QUESTIONED AS TO WHY HE DIDN'T ACCEPT DESAI'S ASSURANCES
ABOUT FOREGOING NUCLEAR WEAPONS AND PNE'S, RIBICOFF SAID HE
BELIEVED THAT DESAI MEANT WHAT HE SAID. BUT ALL MEN ARE MOR-
TAL AND HE DIDN'T KNOW WHO WOULD SUCCEED DESAI. RIBICOFF
ADDED IN ANSWER TO ANOTHER QUESTION (MORE PROPERBLY, ANOTHER
ARGUMENT) THAT THE MORE COUNTRIES WHICH HAVE THE CAPACITY THE
MORE DIFFICULT IT WILL BE TO STOP THE SPREAD OF NUCLEAR
WEAPONS. GREAT RESPONSIBILITY RESTS WITH THE US AND THE SOVIET
UNION, AND THIS IS ONE ISSUE ON WHICH THE US AND THE SOVIET
UNION SEE EYE TO EYE.

8. RIBICOFF CONCLUDED BY NOTING THAT THE THOUGH THAT, AS IT

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PROBES ITS NUCLEAR NON-PROLIFERATION POLICY, THE US HAD A
RESPONSIBILITY FOR MAKING AVAILABLE THROUGH AN INTERNATIONAL
AGENCY A SUPPLY OF ENRICHED URANIUM AND HEAVY WATER SO THERE
WILL BE FAIR AND EQUITABLE DISTRIBUTION FOR PEACEFUL USES.
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9. AS NOTED IN REFTEL, SENATOR RIBICOFF'S REMARKS WERE
PROMINENTLY FEATURED IN DELHI PRESS. ONLY MAJOR DISTORTION
WAS THAT OF "HINDUSTAN TIMES", WHICH IN ITS FRONT PAGE LEAD
STORY AND ACCOMPANYING HEADLINE MISQUOTED SENATOR TO THE
EFFECT THT PENDING LEGISLATION WOULD PROHIBIT FURTHER SUPPLIES
OF ENRICHED URANIUM AND HEAVY WATER TO COUNTRIES THAT DID NOT
SIGN THE NPT. SAMACHAR REPORT USED BY THREE OF SIX ENGLISH
LANGUAGE PAPERS HIGHLIGHTED SENATOR'S COMMENTS ON PENDING
LEGISLATION, HIS ENDORSEMENT OF POSITION OF NUCLEAR SUPPLIERS
GROUP AND HIS RESPONSE REGARDING PM DESAI'S PERSONAL COM-
MITMENT TO NO TESTING. ALL PAPERS REPORTED SENATOR RIBICOFF'S
RESPONSE TO THE QUESTION CONCERNING THE PRESIDENT'S ANNOUNCE-
MENT OF ANOTHER TARAPUR SHIPMENT AND OFFER OF HEAVY WATER AS
WELL AS SENATOR STEVEN'S REMARKS THAT THE PRESIDENT'S COMMIT-
MENT WOULD BE HONORED. "THE STATESMAN" AND "TIMES OF INDIA"
ALSO REPORTED SENATOR'S GENERAL COMMENTS REGARDING US WILLING-
NESS TO ENCOURAGE PEACEFUL USES OF NUCLEAR ENERGY BUT ALSO
ITS DESIRE TO HALT PROLIFERATION AND ULTIMATELY BRING ABOUT
NUCLEAR DISARMAMENT.

10. EDITORIAL COMMENT CONTINUES TO BE HIGHLY CRITICAL OF THE
US POLICY. THE STATESMAN JANUARY 7 MINIMIZED THE SIGNIFICANCE
BOTH OF THE PRESIDENT'S OFFER OF ANOTHER SHIPMENT FOR TARA-
PUR BECAUSE IT WOULD FILL A REQUEST MADE LONG AGO AND OF A
SUPPLY OF HEAVY WATER BECAUSE INDIA HAS ALREADY ACCEPTED
STRINGENT INTERNATIONAL SAFEGUARDS UNDER SOVIET PRESSURE.
CALLING FURTHER SUPPLIES FOR TARAPUR THE TEST OF US GOOD WILL,
THE STATESMAN SAID THAT THE AMERICANS SHOULD TRY TO ARRANGE
LARGER SHIPMENTS BEFORE THE LEGAL RESTRICTIONS OF THE PENDING
US LEGISLATION BECOME EFFECTIVE. "THE INDIAN EXPRESS" INTER-
PRETS DESAI'S REFERENCE TO IMPROVISATION IF TARAPUR FUD IS
CUT OFF AS A POSSIBLE INDICATION THAT "THE ALREADY PROVEN
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CONSIDERABLE COMPETENCE" OF INDIAN SCIENTISTS MAY MAKE INDIA
MORE SELF RELIANT IN THE NUCLEAR FIELD THAN HAD BEEN THOUGHT
POSSIBLE. "THE NATIONAL HERALD" JANUARY 8 SAID THAT SENATOR
RIBICOFF HAD CLEARED THE AMBIGUITY REGARDING THE US POSITION
ON INDIA'S NUCLEAR POLICY. IT ADDS THAT THE "ONLY COUNTRTR

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WHICH HAS USED THE ATOMIC BOMB HAS NO MORAL RIGHT TO PREACH"
AND IT IS UNLIKELY THAT THE REST OF THE WORLD WILL FOLLOW THE
US BLINDLY ON AN ISSUE WHICH CONCERNS NOT ONLY NUCLEAR PRO-
LIFERATION BUT ALSO NATIONAL SELF RESPECT. "THE PATRIOT"
JANUARY 8 DEMONSTRATED A SINGULARLY POOR GRASP OF THE ISSUES
INVOLVED IN STATING THAT IT "WAS GENERALLY UNDERSTOOD" THAT
DESAI'S RENUNCIATION OF PNE'S WAS IN RESPONSE TO "ASSUMED US
WILLINGNESS" TO STICK TO ITS CONTRACTUAL OBLIGATIONS REGARDING
TARAPUR AND THAT IT THEREFORE WAS A "VERY UNPLEASANT SUR-
PRISE" WHEN THE PRESIDENT ADHERED TO US NUCLEAR POLICY DURING
THE VISIT. THE PATRIOT ALSO PICKED UP SENATOR RIBICOFF'S
REMARKS AS FURTHER INDICATION THAT THE US WILL NOT FULFILL
ITS CONTRACTUAL OBLIGATIONS ON TARAPUR. CONTRARY TO MOST
NEWSPAPERS LATELY, THE "TIMES OF INDIA" JANUARY 9 WAS HIGHLY
CRITICAL OF DESAI'S POSITION. WHILE PRAISING THE PRIME MIN-
ISTER'S POSITION ON THE NPT AND REMARKS TO THE VISITING CODEL,
THE TIMES FAULTS HIS "MAGISTERIAL PRONOUNCEMENT" THAT HE WOULD
NEVER GO IN FOR NUCLEAR WEAPONS EVEN IF THE COUNTRY WERE TO
BE DESTROYED. THE TIMES SAUS THAT THE PRESENT NUCLEAR
POLICY HAS BEEN BASED ON THE ASSUMPTION THAT THE ABSENCE OF
NUCLEAR WEAPONS WOULD NOT ENFANGER THE COUNTRY AND IT IS
THEREFORE A "LONG AND DANGEROUS JUMP" TO PROCLAIM THAT INDIA
WILL NOT DEVELOP NUCLEAR WEAPONS EVEN IF THE ALTERNATIVE IS
ITS ANNIHILATION. THE TIMES COMPLAINS THAT DESAI'S "STRANGE
DOCTRINE" IS THE RESULT NEITHER OF NATIONAL NOR CABINET DE-
BATE, AND THIS SHOWS THAT THE PRIME MINISTER IS EXTENDING TO
THE "AWESOMELY COMPLICATED NUCLEAR FIELD" THE ATTITUDE WHICH
LEADS HIM TO ESPOUSE PROHIBITION.
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